

WASHINGTON - U.S. Reps. Harry E. Mitchell and Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA) yesterday introduced H.R. 5357, the Deploy National Guard Troops to the Border Act, which would deploy a minimum of 3,000 additional National Guard troops to the border.

"The cross-border smuggling is out of control and we can't wait anymore. We need additional National Guard troops, and we need them now." said Mitchell. "Arizona continues to pay a huge price for the federal government's failure to secure the border. Here in the Phoenix metropolitan area, smugglers and Mexican drug cartels have set up drop houses, which are magnets for crime and violence. So much so, Phoenix has become a kidnapping capital."

In Arizona, the Phoenix metropolitan area is believed to have as many as 1,000 drop houses, used as way stations for drug and human smuggling operations. [Source: Associated Press, Jan. 16, 2008] The crime associated with smuggling operations was one of reasons ABC News, last year, called Phoenix the "Kidnapping Capital of the U.S.A". [Source: [ABC News](#), Feb. 11, 2009]

National Guard troops have proven highly effective in the past. According to the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol, the Yuma Sector experienced a 68 percent decrease in apprehensions between October 1, 2006, and July 31, 2007, compared with the previous year. Border-wide, the National Guard helped seize more than 1,080 vehicles used to transport drugs and/or illegal immigrants, more than 300,600 pounds of marijuana, and 5,060 pounds of cocaine.

Mitchell has previously requested that National Guard troops be kept and placed on the border. In 2007 and again in 2008, Mitchell wrote to President Bush to ask him to extend the National Guard's deployment as part of Operation Jump Start. [Sources: [Mitchell Release](#), August 9, 2007; [Mitchell Release](#), May 7, 2008; [Green Valley News & Sun](#), May 21, 2008]

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In 2009 and again in 2010, Mitchell wrote to President Obama to request National Guard troops be placed on the border. [Sources: [Letter to President](#), March 25, 2009; [Letter to the President](#), March 30, 2010; [Mitchell Release](#), July 6, 2009].

Last year, Mitchell teamed with Rep. Brian Bilbray (R-Cal.) to amend the Fiscal Year 2010 Homeland Security Appropriations Bill to secure millions of dollars in additional funding for security improvements at the border. [Source: [Mitchell Release](#), Oct. 29, 2009]

Also last year, Mitchell offered an amendment to stop a proposed 25 percent cut in federal funding for the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP). SCAAP provides federal assistance to cash-strapped state and local agencies that are forced to divert resources from public safety services to deal with illegal immigrants. [Source: [Mitchell Release](#), June 14, 2009]

Mitchell has also commissioned a Government Accountability Office (GAO) investigation into federal efforts to identify and remove criminal aliens and combat drop houses. The results of this multi-year investigation are expected by early summer 2010. [Source: [Mitchell Release](#), April 26, 2010]

The text of Mitchell's statement upon introduction of H.R. 5357 is below:

Thursday, May 20, 2010

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of bipartisan legislation I introduced earlier today with my colleague Representative Dana Rohrabacher of California: The Deploy National Guard Troops to the Border Act.

The Federal Government has a responsibility to secure the border, and it simply hasn't done it. As a result, we are once again facing an emergency. Not just an emergency at the border, I might add, but an emergency in the interior--in places like Phoenix, where smugglers and Mexican drug cartels have set up vast networks of drop houses, which operate as way stations for their illegal activities. The crime and violence associated with these drop houses is

horrendous. Phoenix has become a kidnapping capital.

This is completely unacceptable.

While, undoubtedly, Congress needs to secure the border and fix our broken immigration system--the situation at the border cannot wait simply because it is an election year. This is an urgent threat to our national security.

I have urged President Obama to send additional National Guard troops to the border, much like I urged President Bush to extend the deployment of National Guard troops to the border in 2008. Sadly, to no avail.

That is why, today, I am introducing legislation to deploy 3,000 National Guard troops to the border to assist U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

Taking this step will help secure the border while Congress works on a more comprehensive, permanent fix.

The National Guard has successfully assisted with border security in the past. Operation Jump Start, which concluded its mission in 2008 proved remarkably effective. According to the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol, the Yuma Sector experienced a 68-percent decrease in apprehensions between October 1, 2006, and July 31, 2007, compared with the previous year. Border-wide, the National Guard helped seize more than 1,080 vehicles used to transport drugs and/or illegal immigrants, more than 300,600 pounds of marijuana, and 5,060 pounds of cocaine.

I thought the National Guard was drawn down too quickly and offered an amendment at the time to extend their deployment. Unfortunately my amendment was blocked from floor consideration.

I know there are strong views about immigration reform, and I know this is an election year. But we cannot let petty political concerns or inflammatory rhetoric to continue to compromise our national security. We cannot continue to kick this down the road for future Congresses to deal with. Now is the time to tone down the rhetoric, come together and take this critical step.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to pass this bill, and continue to work on a permanent security solution, as well as a fix to our broken and ineffectual immigration system.

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